NUMB. CXI.

The SPECTATOR.

——Inter Silvas Academi quærere Verum. Hor.

Saturday, July 7. 1711.

THE Courſe of my laſt Speculation led me inſenſibly into a Subject upon which I always meditate with great Delight, I mean the Immortality of the Soul. I was Yeſterday walking alone in one of my Friend's Walks, and loſt my ſelf in it very agreeably, as I was running over in my Mind the ſeveral Arguments that eſtabliſh this great Point, which is the Ground of Morality, and the Source of all the noble Hopes and ſecret Joys that can ariſe in the Heart of a reaſonable Creature. I conſidered thoſe ſeveral Proofs drawn,

Firſt, From the Nature of the Soul it ſelf, and particularly its Immateriality; which tho' not abſolutely neceſſary to the Eternity of its Duration, is, I think, been evinced to almoſt a Demonſtration.

Secondly, From its Paſſions and Sentiments, as particularly from its Love of Exiſtence, its Horror of Annihilation, and its Hopes of Immortality, with that ſecret Satisfaction which it finds in the Practice of Virtue, and that Uneaſineſs which follows in it upon the Commiſſion of Vice.

Thirdly, From the Nature of the Supreme Being, whoſe Juſtice, Goodneſs, Wiſdom and Veracity are all concerned in this great Point.

But among theſe and other excellent Arguments for the Immortality of the Soul, there is one drawn from the perpetual Progreſs of the Soul to its Perfection, without a Poſſibility of ever arriving at it; which is a Hint that I do not remember to have been opened and improved by others who have written on this Subject, tho' it ſeems to me to carry a great Weight with it. How can it enter into the Thoughts of Man, that the Soul, which is capable of ſuch immenſe Perfections, and of receiving new Improvements to all Eternity, ſhall fall away into nothing almoſt as ſoon as it is created? Are ſuch Abilities made for no Purpoſe? A Brute arrives at a point of Perfection that he can never paſs. In a few Years he has all the Endowments he is capable of, and were he to live ten thouſand more, would be the ſame thing he is at preſent. Were a human Soul thus at a ſtand in her Accompliſhments, were her Faculties to be full blown, and incapable of further Enlargements, I could imagine it might fall away inſenſibly, and drop at once into a State of Annihilation. But can we believe a thinking Being, that is in a perpetual Progreſs of Improvements, and travelling on from Perfection to Perfection, after having juſt looked abroad into the Works of its Creator, and made a few Diſcoveries of his infinite Goodneſs, Wiſdom and Power, muſt periſh at her firſt ſetting out, and in the very beginning of her Enquiries?

A Man, conſidered in his preſent State, ſeems only ſent into the World to propagate his Kind, and provide himſelf with a Succeſſor, and immediately quits his Poſt to make room for him.

——————————— *hæres,*
Hæredem alterius, velut unda ſupervenit undam.

He does not ſeem born to enjoy Life, but to deliver it down to others. This is not ſurprizing to conſider in Animals, which are formed for our uſe, and can finiſh their Buſineſs in a ſhort Life. The Silk-worm, after having ſpun her Task, lays her Eggs and dies. But a Man can never have taken in his full meaſure of Knowledge, has not time to ſubdue his Paſſions, eſtabliſh his Soul in Virtue, and come up to the Perfection of his Nature, before he is hurried off the Stage. Would an infinitely wiſe Being make ſuch glorious Creatures for ſo mean a Purpoſe? Can he delight in the Production of ſuch abortive Intelligences, ſuch ſhort-lived reaſonable Beings? Would he give us Talents that are not to be exerted? Capacities that are never to be gratified? How can we find that Wiſdom, which ſhines through all his Works, in the Formation of Man, without looking

looking on this World, as only a Nurſery for the next, and believing that the ſeveral Generations of rational Creatures, which riſe up and diſappear in ſuch quick Succeſſions, are only to receive their firſt Rudiments of Exiſtence here, and afterwards to be tranſplanted into a more friendly Climate, where they may ſpread and flouriſh to all Eternity?

There is not, in my Opinion, a more pleaſing and triumphant Conſideration in Religion than this of the perpetual Progreſs which the Soul makes towards the Perfection of its Nature, without ever arriving at a Period in it. To look upon the Soul as going on from Strength to Strength, to conſider that ſhe is to ſhine for ever with new Acceſſions of Glory, and brighten to all Eternity: That ſhe will be ſtill adding Virtue to Virtue, and Knowledge to Knowledge, carries in it ſomething wonderfully agreeable to that Ambition which is natural to the Mind of Man. Nay, it muſt be a Proſpect pleaſing to God himſelf, to ſee his Creation for ever beautifying in his Eyes, and drawing nearer to him, by greater degrees of Reſemblance.

Methinks this ſingle Conſideration, of the Progreſs of a finite Spirit to Perfection, will be ſufficient to extinguiſh all Envy in inferior Natures, and all Contempt in ſuperior. That Cherubim which now appears as a God to a human Soul, knows very well that the Period will come about in Eternity, when the Human Soul ſhall be as perfect as he himſelf now is. Nay, when ſhe ſhall look down upon that degree of Perfection, as much as ſhe now falls ſhort of it. It is true, the higher Nature ſtill advances, and by that means preſerves his Diſtance and Superiority in the ſcale of Being; but he knows how high ſoever the Station is of which he ſtands poſſeſs'd at preſent, the inferior Nature will at length mount up to it, and ſhine forth in the ſame Degree of Glory.

With what Aſtoniſhment and Veneration may we look into our own Souls, where there are ſuch hidden Stores of Virtue and Knowledge, ſuch inexhauſted Sources of Perfection? We know not yet what we ſhall be, nor will it ever enter into the Heart of Man to conceive the Glory that will be always in Reſerve for him. The Soul conſidered with its Creator, is like one of thoſe Mathematical Lines that may draw nearer to another for all Eternity, without a Poſſibility of touching it: And can there be a Thought ſo tranſporting, as to conſider our ſelves in theſe perpetual Approaches to him, who is not only the Standard of Perfection but of Happineſs!

Compleat Setts of this Paper, for the Month of June, are to be ſold by Mr. Graves in St. James's Street; Mr. Lewis under Tom's Coffee-Houſe, Covent-Garden; Mr. Lillie, Perfumer, the Corner of Beauford-Buildings; Mr. Sanger at the Temple Gate; Mr. Lloyd near the Church in the Temple; Mr. Knapton in St. Paul's Church-Yard; Mr. Round in Exchange Ally, and Mrs. Baldwin in Warwick-lane, where alſo may be had thoſe for the Months of March, April and May.

ADVERTISEMENTS.

By Her Majeſty's Company of Comedians.

AT the Theatre Royal in Drury-Lane, on Tueſday next being the 10th day of July, will be preſented a Comedy Call'd The Taming of a Shrew, or Sawney the Scot. The Part of Lord Beauſoy by Mr. Keen, Woodall Mr. Johnſon. Petruchio Mr. Powell, Geraldo Mr. Hubard, Winlove Mr. Bickerſtaff, Tranio Mr. Bullock Jun. Sir Lyonel Winlove Mr. Croſs, Jamy Mr. Norris, Sawney Mr. Bullock Sen. Margaret Mrs. Bradſhaw.

The Undertakers of the Fatherly Society, at their Office in Knowles Court Little-Carter-lane, give notice to all Perſons Members of the ſaid Society, That upon Saturday the ſeventh Day of July inſtant, they will give ſuch Reaſonable and Good Security for their faithful Execution of the Truſts of the ſaid Office as to the Truſtees ſhall ſeem fit to require, and that all Perſons Members of the ſaid Society who ſhall not before that Time have paid all their Contributions due to the ſaid Society, will then peremptorily be Excluded all Benefit and Advantage which would otherwiſe accrue by Virtue of any Entry or Claim by them made in the ſaid Office; at which Time no Claims made up in the ſaid Society will be then Adjuſted, and the Payment of them directed in due Courſe, as they have been or ſhall be made upon the ſaid Society.

The Delightful Chymical Liquor, for the Breath Teeth, and Gums. Which in a Moment makes the moſt Noiſome Breath Smell delicately Fine and Charming, and in very little time infallibly Cures it, ſo that an offenſive Breath will not return; it certainly makes the blackeſt and moſt foul Teeth perfectly White, Clean and Beautiful to a Miracle; Cures the Scurvy in the Gums, throughly ſo inveterate, making the Fleſh grow again, when almoſt Eaten away, and infallibly faſtens to ſe Teeth to Admiration, even in old People, who too often falſly think their Age to be the Occaſion; In ſhort, for delightfully Perfuming, and quickly Curing an Ill-ſcented Breath, for preſently making the blackeſt Teeth moſt excellently White, certainly fatning them when Looſe, effectually preſerving them from Rotting or Decaying, and aſſuredly Curing the Scurvy in the Gums, it has not its Equal in the Univerſe, as Abundance of the Nobility and Gentry throughout the Kingdom have Experienced. Is ſold at Mr. Payn's a Toy Shop at the Angel and Crown in St. Paul's Church-Yard, near Cheap-ſide, at 2 s. 6 d. a Bottle with Directions.

Juſt Publiſh'd,

Conſiderations on Mr. Whiſton's Hiſtorical Preface, being an Anſwer to his plain Queſtions, and other moſt material Paſſages therein contained, in a Letter to the Author of the Hiſtory of Montaniſm; and by him Recommended. With an Appendix: Containing an Account of the Jewiſh Notion of the Meſſia in our Saviour's Time; of the Succeſſive Modes of Subſiſtence of the Divine Logos; of the Communication of the Super-eminent Names of God; and of the Generation and Creation of Wiſdom. Printed for J. and J. Bonwick at the Red Lion in St. Paul's Church-yard.

Juſt Publiſh'd,

An Account of the preſent State and Government of the Empire of Germany: In a Letter to Thomas Foley of Whitley in the County of Worceſter, Eſq; by M. Le Vaſſor. Printed for Jacob Tonſon at Shakeſpear's Head over-againſt Catherine ſtreet in the Strand.

Juſt Publiſh'd and Printed very Correctly, with a neat Elzever Letter for the Pocket; Poems on ſeveral Occaſions, written by Mr. Prior. Printed for Jacob Tonſon at Shakeſpear's Head over againſt Catharine-ſtreet in the Strand.

Juſt Publiſh'd,

A very Neat and Correct Edition of the Works of Mr. Francis Beaumont and Mr. John Fletcher. In Seven Vols. Illuſtrated with Cuts. With ſome Account of the Life and Writings of the Authors. Printed for J. Tonſon, at Shakeſpear's Head over againſt Catherine ſtreet in the Strand.

LONDON: Printed for *Sam. Buckley*, at the *Dolphin* in *Little-Britain*; and Sold by *A. Baldwin* in *Warwick-Lane*; where Advertiſements are taken in; as alſo by *Charles Lillie*, Perfumer, at the Corner of *Beauford-Buildings* in the *Strand*.